

Lake Como's history is like a finely woven tapestry ... it is filled with many colorful people and events that turned it into what it has now become.

We will begin the timeline with 1940

On or about May 28, 1940 Dr. Clayton Royce acting as trustee of the Florida Athletic and Health Association and its first President, was instrumental in the purchase of property from Peggy Leonard. The first purchase of the eventual 350 acres included Dorothy and A.W. "Bru" Brubaker \$2000, Walter Burrow and his wife \$2000, George and Hildegard Allison \$2000, Willie Walker and Ernest Burger \$2000, Joe King \$1000 and Dorothy's sister \$1000. Prime citrus land, it provided income from the trees to finance the new venture.

Dorothy (who was a Legal Secretary and ASA Woman of the year in 1963) and Avery Weaver Brubaker "Bru" who was the son of a Pennsylvania Mennonite minister ("Bru" was born 3/16/1898.) created the Florida Athletic and Health Association which received its charter April 25, 1941. The original Executive Committee was as follows:

President	C.E. Royce, M.D.
Vice President	B.L. Hamner
Secretary/Treasurer	D.H. Brubaker (Dorothy)
Board of Directors	Major George D. Robinson Frank S. Durston Otto Pfundstein Chas. S. Sharman Sidney S. Newell

Dr. Royce was involved in a law suit with the Florida Athletic and Health Association regarding legal ownership of the Lake Como grounds. He maintained that the original charter members were taking too long fulfilling their obligation for payment of the property. He and his wife Audrey took possession of the main house, moving their possessions in and having the other members possessions moved into other buildings on the property for storage. They remained in the main house from about December 1944 through 1945. On February 14, 1945 the U.S. Government granted non tax status to the club. (There was also a fire involved that became an issue in the lawsuits.) Royce won the lower court decisions; however in 1947 when Mr. Brubaker appealed to the Supreme Court, he and his wife Dorothy took controlling ownership of the Lake Como Club. When "Bru" died February 14, 1956 Lake Como was owned by Dorothy who was CEO. She made Arthur "Cot" Cotterill President of the corporation. Before Dorothy Brubaker died June 25, 1996 she sold controlling interest of Lake Como to Ron Cotterill to keep the government from charging the club \$800,000 in taxes. Ron became manager of the club in the 70's and he remained so until his divorce settlement from his wife Kathy. Dorothy (who was like a mother to Ron ... she paid for his education and he called her "Chum") wanted Lake Como to be owned by the residents after she died and she made Ron promise her he would see that it happened. The divorce settlement stated that Kathy would see that Ron's promise to Dorothy was kept. Home owners of Lake Como raised \$1.5 million dollars towards the purchase of the mobile home park from Kathy Cotterill who held the additional mortgage of \$1.5 million dollars, and Lake Como Co-op was formed February 14, 1997. The original Board of Directors consisted of nine members.

Now that ownership has been established we can list the many accomplishments / activities / events that took place through the decades. In each decade there were many volunteers who worked very hard to make Lake Como the best place to be ... naturally!

After World War Two ended the barracks (Big "T") units were brought in for accommodations to add to cottages that were used. In 1949 there were 30 nudist clubs and 3000 members nationwide in American Sunbathing Association (ASA). In 1950 Lake Como became a member of ASA with "Bru" as an officer of Eastern Sunbathing Association (ESA).

The movie "The Garden of Eden" was filmed in Lake Como in 1954. "Bru" played himself in the movie. There was a lot of controversy over whether or not the movie should be shown in theaters because of its nudity.

In 1955 the lakeside sauna was built to hold 36 people.

By 1956 Lake Como was a full time business with 1100 members. Alcohol was not permitted in 1956. "Bru" died February 14, 1956 at which time Dorothy took over as CEO and had Arthur "Cot" Cotterill manage the operations of the club.

In 1957 a 60' X 24' recreation building was built. There was a launching ramp, ski jumps and three new fiberglass boats for members to use for free. They had badminton, table tennis, pool table, complete kitchen facilities and a dining room that sat 200. Volley ball was a traveling circuit among Florida nudist resorts including Cypress Cove, Seminole, and Sunny Palms. Dredging started on Lake Como to fill in the lakefront area.

Art "Cot" Cotterill defied a state law that required nudists to apply for county permits, submit to fingerprinting, list prior criminal convictions, provide character references and give the names of the applicant's immediate family. The suit was filed October 4, 1961. The Florida Supreme Court quickly overturned the law 5-0 in 1962. The cost to the club was \$4000. "Cot" went to jail to protest this law. For his meritorious service, "Cot" was named "Outstanding Nudist of the year."

November 22, 1963 the King tennis court was finished. Players would sign up early in the morning to play on it.

All Florida Days hosted its annual beauty contest with men, women and children. A tree house for meditation existed overlooking the lake north of the sauna. In order to gain a membership card one was required to make two trips to Lake Como. The south grove was expanded to the burn pile area and the canal filled in connecting Lake Como to the commercial "Borrow" Pit (renamed Heron Lake by one of our residents) in the South Grove to physical Lake Como which is southwest of Lake Como Club. The canal was used to pump water out, but it was never truly connected.

A very flattering article was written in the St. Pete Times about Lake Como June 1, 1969 by Freelance writer James. S. Sikorske. Some quotes by members at that time: A 91 year old member wearing only a baseball cap said, "I would recommend nudism to anybody, young or old. It has helped lengthen my life. It promotes such a clean atmosphere, a clean mind and it purifies sex." "Clothes are just a masquerade, a mask for people. Clothes make people think they are something other than what they are. Without clothes there is no façade to hide behind." "I used to think nudists were crazy until I tried it and became one. Now I think the rest of the world is nuts."

In 1977 Pasco Sheriff John Short, seeking coverage for an upcoming election, staged a drug raid at Lake Como with full media coverage. An undercover agent busted several people. Another member bailed everyone who was charged out of jail. An article was written in the Freedom Press. A Lake Como woman had a photo taken of her nude in the Pines shower and sued the county TV station. She won the lawsuit.

In 1978 the commercial "borrow" pit was dug and the dirt sold. (*A borrow pit is a pit created to provide earth that can be used as fill at another site.*) Land was transferred from Dorothy to Arthur and Mary Cotterill east of Dale Mabry and Professional Office complex land was transferred to a limited partnership with Ron Cotterill where Ron made his own law office. Ron and Kathy lived in the cottage at Leonard Road and Old Barn Road (now named Cot Road). Ron became manager of Lake Como. Deer Lake (*also used as a borrow pit*) was dredged to build up land to add to the sandy beach and to enlarge groves in the West Grove.

A deep freeze killed off most of the orange trees in 1979.

The restaurant would do a Sunday steak roast at 1 pm. Steak, potato, slaw and beans were served for something like \$3.50. People lined up past the volleyball court. When the steaks were gone they were done. The bell that is currently at the Petanque courts was originally at the back door of the restaurant. It was used to signal the meals which were served family style. Before the bell was used to signal meals it was used at the front gate to signal guests arriving. Meals all started at a specific time. One set of volunteers cooked, and those served were responsible for cleaning up.

The Naturist Society (TNS) was born and had their first gathering in 1980 in California.

A cloverleaf hot tub was built in 1980. One of Lake Como's volunteers worked on the design and made the hot tub a reality working with management at the cost of \$24,500. He was also instrumental, along with other volunteers, in the placement of the lap swimming pool in 1985 that was dedicated in April of 1986.

By 1982 there were 158 full time lots and 230 people at Lake Como living here full time. In the mid 80's a hot dog roast was provided by Lake Como Club every Friday.

Hurricane Elena smashed the Australian Pines in the Pines RV area on Labor Day weekend 1985. Over a period of time the rest died due to disease.

In 1986 Lake Como was overcome with Hydrilla which was cured by adding carp to eat it. Mowing was tried ineffectively twice.

A water ski club was formed called Ski Bares. They used a portable floating jump platform and parasailing was done on Lake Como in the 80's.

In 1991 American Sunbathing Association (ASA) held their Annual Convention at Lake Como for their 60th anniversary. One of Lake Como's present (2012) maintenance staff organized the kids programs during this convention.

ASA becomes the American Association of Nude Recreation (AANR) October 1, 1994.

By 1995 many services were available at Lake Como ... most notably maid service. Remote controlled boats were popular on Sunday nights in the nineties.

July 27, 1995 there was a nude resort radio broadcast on 98 Rock Radio in Tampa 6 - 10 am.

In 1998 Lee Bass started a New Year's Day dinner, cooking a pig and asking for volunteers to donate food. After his death the New Year's Day dinner became the Lee Bass Bash Memorial - the New Year's Day Dinner. It was taken over by the Member's Club and is now currently held by the Co-op.

Dorothy Brubaker died June 25, 1996 and Kathy Cotterill became owner of Lake Como in the divorce settlement from Ron.

February 14, 1997 Lake Como Co-op, Inc. was formed due to the efforts of Bill Doenges along with a dedicated group of home owners who wanted to keep their nudist environment. A members committee was created in 1997 and lasted until 2003. The Co-op eventually developed a finance committee to offer suggestions to its Board of Directors as needed.

During the nineties nude bowling was popular Sunday and Monday at Royal Lanes on Brinson Road between Lake Como and Paradise Lakes.

In 2000 Lake Como Co-op dedicated a 40 acre area of our resort as a nature preserve and sports center. All projects were to be privately funded, nature friendly and built and maintained by volunteers. Since then ten volleyball courts, five clay tennis courts, large pavilion with observation deck, 225 yard golf driving range, nine hole golf course, two KM nature trail, dog park and a two acre sports field have been added. To this point (2012) over \$400,000.00 and thousands of volunteer hours have been donated to this new project in our backyard. A paver brick walk of names records the majority of generous residents, members and guests who made this all possible. These memorial bricks were all made by a dedicated resident and sold for \$50 a brick.

In 2001 Lake Como's first website was developed by one of its great volunteers; and the first nude Super Bowl South (SBS) volleyball tournament was held ... so was the first Tennis in the Buff tournament.

Between 2002 and 2011 many wooded trails were created by volunteers in the South Grove as was the Orange Blossom and Star Trails in the West Grove ... also by volunteers.

Starting in 2001 a new water and gravity sewer system, along with new road paving, was installed throughout the Community. Costing just under One Million Dollars it was connected to the County System as required by communities that come under Florida DEP.

In 2002 an 8' fence was added to the North Grove along Leonard Road and in the South Grove areas. The orange groves were replaced by pine tree seedlings to maintain agricultural status for tax purposes. Six acres were planted in 2005, 20 acres were planted in 2007 and another six acres added in 2011.

Water and electric lines were put into the North Grove for special events and RV's in 2003.

Between 2003 and 2004 The National Geographic Society filmed the television show "Taboo" at Lake Como.

June 30, 2004 a Lake Como resident devised \$478,857.76 in her will to the Co-op, some of which helped finance the South Grove development.

Lake Como experienced four hurricanes in the 2004 season ... none were direct hits. A magnificent large Magnolia tree in the North Grove was lost to lightning and four residents had damage to their homes.

The Inaugural Car Show was held in October of 2004. The same year that a new stage was built in the North Grove where many other special events have been held including the Hurricane Relief Concert for victims of Katrina's fury, 5-K Runs in May and continuing Car Shows every October. Lake Como's 10th anniversary celebration of being a Co-op was held in the North Grove.

The Naturist Society (TNS) held Southern Gatherings at Lake Como in 2005 and 2008.

Lake Como is in a constant state of renovation. In 2007 work was started to develop the South Grove for added residential and RV lots. The first residential unit was placed on its lot before RV'ers started moving into the new area in October. The new area boasts an additional bath house and laundry facility for campers. An Open House was held February 9, 2008 to showcase the new development.

2009 was a busy year: four new cabins were placed in our South Grove Development as rental units, new fencing replaced the old around the swimming pool and a new canopy replaced the old one, rooms sharing bathrooms in the Big T motel unit were turned into suites and new shuffleboard and pickle ball courts were placed near the original Kings tennis court. Pasco County recognized our Pine plantings of Lake Como as part of the Forest Stewardship Program.

Between 2005 and 2011 hundreds of the invasive species Melaluca trees were removed. This was all done by volunteer labor. Their next task will be to tackle other invasive plant species and try to eliminate them as well.

In July of 2009 and 2010 AANR sought to set a Guinness World Record by seeing how many skinny-dippers could enter water venues at exactly the same time all over the United States and Canada. Lake Como's contribution was 452 bodies in our swimming pool!

Our World Famous Butt Hutt increased its size adding the expansion over the lake in 2010. Co-op funds paid a bit more than half the cost and volunteer fundraising efforts garnered the rest. It is a great place to take in the beauty of Lake Como.

Through the years many volunteers have given up many hours to contribute their talents to whatever project or activity was planned to raise funds for our beloved Lake Como. There have been Medieval Fests, Oktoberfests, Car Shows, 5-K Runs, many different music venues, pub crawls, golf chipping challenges, variety shows, Olympic games, sports tournaments and many other venues ... all organized and staffed by volunteers. Lake Como wouldn't be what it is without the efforts of our awesome volunteers.

Lake Como was the first nudist organization to get over 1,000 members in 1956 and the first nudist organization to get over 2,000 members in the mid 1960's.

Lake Como became the largest nudist club in America in 1969 and was the first nudist organization to get over 3,000 members in 1972 with 3,200 members.

Lake Como has offered camping, rooms, food, security, entertainment, nature, sports and friendly service for family nudists since its humble beginnings in 1941.